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called upon to testify against a woman's character, and a feeling of respect is aroused by the commendation "that he perjured himself like a gentleman"!

Is there a higher law than the law? Is there an ethical point beyond pure ethics, that human nature feels intuitively this peculiar sense of heroism in telling what is not strictly true in order to save life, liberty, and reputation? Or is life a small thing, and liberty a small thing, and reputation a small thing to place beside the truth?

Ought all things, even a mother's love, and a wife's devotion, and a sister's honor, to be sacrificed to preserve the truth intact?

ELLA STERLING CUMMINS.

### TO WOMEN NOT DUMB.

FROM the very nature of her life, interests, social up-bringing, and social atmosphere, woman is the sex that everlastingly shows the least moral and intellectual responsibility about the use of language. It sometimes seems as if any conscience or understanding of the value of words, and of what a phrase means or does not mean, is not to be found in the sex. A word is a short cut to expressing an idea. Women dash for it involuntarily, with as little premeditation as they dart through the first gap in the hedge, with flying skirts, if a red cow looks at them attentively in crossing the field. Men have to consider consequences in words and sentences; men have to reflect, even in a twinkling, that yea is yea and nay is nay, and that a blow from the shoulder or the payment of a check is a material consequence of what and how a thing is talked over with somebody else.

But woman, incorrigible, heedless, talky, injudicious, and indiscriminate woman! what shall be done with you?—you irritating, delightful, perfectly irresponsible creature in your use of adjectives and qualifying clauses, whether you are describing how you missed a train, or enjoyed a ball, or saw a street fight! Have you no conscience in your picturesque loquacity? Do you wish to go on exaggerating, ly—yes, lying, misrepresenting facts, in your charming desire to tell your own story in your own way? Will no god of accuracy cry, "Hold, enough," and stop you in your mad career, and either at one fell swoop reduce your vocabulary to one of laconic sort or else enlighten you as to the truth that words are the great disguisers of what we have known and seen and felt?

O women! you who are not dumb, nor (if you can possibly help it) taciturn and reticent, miserly of talk! refer the question back to fundamental principles. If you have really, at the bottom of your heart, the wish to do things honestly, correctly, no matter how trivial the things be, and because truth is lovely, do, for pity's sake, speak accurately, use good English and just phrases. It is so easy, so *very* easy, if you will only think about words and remember that words are ideas, and that one cannot lay aside brains and common-sense with any excuse when talking begins. You cannot push away influence in a sentence's course. You are morally a surety for a story's being told truthfully as to every adjective, accurately as to each phrase, with reasonable precision as to every clause, and in sentences that, furthermore, will bear all the grammatical tests that education in your youth should enable them to sustain.

Now, this does not mean the precisian's and purist's way. It does not kill colloquialism. It means merely thinking a little of *how* you are expressing yourself, and of how honestly you are conveying your facts. Opin-

ion is a fact. Convey it as a fact. The society woman, in particular, has become so inconsiderate a narrator that men are becoming more and more impressed with a woman's clear and accurate phraseology, as the outward and visible sign of a responsible mind behind it. In very young women inaccuracy is pardonable, along with sentimentality, romping, and quick temper. But in the woman long out of school and in the thirties it is intolerable.

Lovely woman, hearken yet again! Do not use sixpenny words when penny ones are your honestest commodity. Avoid the usually false, mischievous word "very," that adds so little to a clause. Do not forget that a sentence you begin must needs have an end. Remember that every time you use a misrepresenting word you are not living up to your moral and intellectual duty, even if you describe only a bonnet.

"But," say you, "it is hard to get into this straight road—all the harder if one has walked out of it long since. I wish I could always say just what I mean to say. But I fear I cannot get to doing it." There is a remedy, my inaccurate sister, a good, simple remedy. Correct yourself sharply, immediately, whenever you lapse from truth to fact and the idea in your heart. Do it at once—even twice—in a sentence. Take back what you have uttered, and substitute the truth; qualify and hedge. After a little of this process—tiresome at first—you will be astonished to find how alert you are growing to expressing things as they should be said. The practice works wonders. You will be transformed, little by little, from an exaggerator to an accurate creature; from a liar to a truth-speaker.

Words are the index to mind, to character. More women are uninteresting and inconsequent to men, more women fail to win men with brains for husbands, because they are indiscriminating speakers, thus arguing indiscriminating minds, than because the hair is carrotty, the nose flat, the complexion less ruddy than the cherry, or Worth gowns dear array. Either matrimonially or in any other way estimated, talk is *not* cheap.

E. IRENÆUS STEVENSON.

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### SELFISHNESS AS A PRESERVATIVE.

SELFISHNESS, which is universally detected, at least in others, is naturally not without advantage to its possessor. Indeed, it could not be otherwise, and remain selfishness. Any one would believe that its advantage would be exclusively material, such as an altruistic person would be ashamed of, and would regard, in any high sense, as a disadvantage. And so it would be, if the conventional moral theories were correct. Unhappily, they are not; many of them, when submitted to the test of human nature, proving unadulteratedly false.

How can selfishness be an advantage even to its practiser? Every one concedes it to be the supreme vice; for it contributes more than any other one thing to the sum of human wretchedness, and retards more than any other the progress of ethical development. Its advantage may be seen in the appearance and quality of the selfish everywhere, if they be carefully and continuously studied.

Select any one of your acquaintances particularly noted for selfishness of a refined sort, and scrutinize him. Is he haggard, careworn, conscience-stricken, as a man concerned only for himself, indifferent to the misery and suffering of his fellows, ought to be? On the contrary, he looks plump, serene, content. Is this but a mask? Is there an invisible canker at his